YOU OUTTA YOUR MIND, MURDOCK? SNEAKING THAT THING INTO THE RING...
...YOU AIN'T TRYIN' TA GET DISQUALIFIED, ARE YA?
NO.
WELL, I HOPE YOU AIN'T ASKIN' THE HOLY MOTHER FOR ADVICE. HAVE A FEELING HER AND THE FIXER MIGHT NOT SEE EYE-TO-EYE.
AND IF YOU WANNA KEEP YOUR BLIND-AS-A-BAT KID SAFE, THE FIXER'S THE ONLY HIGHER POWER YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT.
SO TAP-DANCE THROUGH THE THIRD. GO DOWN IN THE FOURTH.
DING!
AND I'LL GIVE THE HOLY MOTHER YOUR REGARDS.

I'M SURE YOU WILL...
ROUND 3
STORY BY CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO & ZEB WELLS
SCRIPT BY ZEB WELLS
ART BY CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO
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CRUSHER COMES IN COCKY... ARMS DOWN, PRACTICALLY OFFERING ME HIS CHIN...
TIMES LIKE THESE I WANT TO TAKE MY SHOT...SEE IF I GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO PUT HIM DOWN. I KNOW I SHOULDN'T...
BUT HELL, HE OFFERED.
STUPID...HE WAS LURING ME INTO A TRAP...
...AND I FELL FOR IT LIKE AN AMATEUR...
BUT THAT'S LIFE. JUST 'CUZ SOMEONE OFFERS SOMETHIN' DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD TAKE IT.

NEVER COULD SAY NO TO HER. I AIN'T SO MUCH AS SMELLED A DRINK OR THOUGHT ABOUT A FIGHT WHILE I WORE HER CROSS...
...BUT THAT'S NOT TO SAY IT NEVER CAME OFF.
THUD
I WAS WHAT MAGGIE DESPISED, AND THE BIG BAD WORLD LOVED ME FOR IT.
IN THE RING, I PUMMELED MY WAY THROUGH THE RANKS...
...A VIOLENT MACHINE BUILT TO BREAK OTHER MEN.
KNOCKOUT! LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IF YOU TOLD ME YESTERDAY I'D BE SAYING THIS, I'D CALL YOU CRAZY...
AND MAGGIE WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN. BUT JOSIE...JOSIE CAME TO EVERY FIGHT. WATCHING ME. BELIEVING IN ME...
THE 20-TO-1 SHOT, BATTLIN' JACK MURDOCK, HAS ROUNDLY DEFEATED SWEET PEA HENDERSON! WHAT AN UPSET!

I STARTED TO EXPECT HER TO BE THERE...TO RELY ON HER.
BUT AT THE END OF THE FIGHT, THE CROSS WENT BACK ON.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, JACK.
YOU'RE MAKIN' ME A LOT OF MONEY. I'M GONNA SEE WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT GETTIN' YOU ONTO THE NEXT CARD IN MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
WHEN CAN YOU BE READY?
I'LL FIGHT TOMORROW IF IT'S MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
I AIN'T GETTIN' ANY YOUNGER.
LOOKIN' GOOD OUT THERE, CHAMP.
MUST BE, THE WAY YOU SCREAM. IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, YOU'RE GONNA GO HOARSE.
I DON'T CARE, JACK. IT'S ALL SO EXCITING...I'M SO PROUD OF YOU!
I-I'M SORRY...THAT SOUNDS SO STUPID. I'M NOT YOUR MOTHER...
HEY, KNOCK THAT OFF. IT AIN'T STUPID...
AIN'T STUPID AT ALL.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
IT AIN'T FOR SURE YET.
YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT AND YOU'RE GONNA WIN, JACK! I CAN SEE IT! YOU'RE GONNA BE FAMOUS!
THANKS, JOSIE. I-I'LL SEE YA TOMORROW, YEAH?
OH, WELL... ACTUALLY, I WAS WONDERING... YOU KNOW...
IF MAYBE YOU WANTED TO COME UP.
OH, JEEZ, JOSIE. I CAN'T DO THAT...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, JACK? I HEAR ABOUT YOU GOIN' WITH OTHER GIRLS...YOU DON'T LIKE ME?
TH-THOSE OTHER GIRLS AIN'T LIKE YOU, JOSIE... YOU'RE NICE...
IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT OF ME TO...
I-I SHOULD GO.
OH, JACK... WAIT...

I'M NOT A SAINT, JACK. I'M JUST ANOTHER PERSON.
NO YOU'RE NOT, JOSIE.
NOT TO ME.

WHATTAYA MEAN? I BARELY BEAT HENDERSON, I GOTTA--
YOU DIDN'T "BARELY" BEAT ANYBODY. SIT DOWN.
YOU THINK A HAS-BEEN LIKE YOU RISES TO THE TOP ON HIS OWN? YOU THINK YOU BEAT HENDERSON?
HE TOOK A DIVE, YOU MOOK! AND YOU'RE GONNA TAKE A DIVE! IN THE FOURTH.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU...
H-HOW MANY FIGHTS DID YOU...
ENOUGH THAT YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW THE ANSWER.
I CAN'T BELIEVE...
YOU SHOULD BE ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES, THANKING ME...I MADE YOU, AND NOW ALL I WANT IS THIS ONE THING.
MAYBE HE AIN'T THINKING STRAIGHT, FIXER.
MAYBE HE AIN'T FIT TO RAISE THAT RETARD SON OF HIS...
HE'S HOME FOR SUMMER, AIN'T HE?
BACK FROM THAT SCHOOL HE GOT INTO ON HIS RETARD SCHOLARSHIP? MAYBE THE KID NEEDS SOME EXTRA...SUPERVISION.
THAT'S ENOUGH, SLADE. HE GETS THE POINT.
YOU THINK ABOUT IT, JACK. IN THE MEANTIME...

"...DON'T WORRY ABOUT TRAININ', ALL RIGHT?"
JACK!!
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN... JUST LIKE YOU SAID! YOU DID IT, JACK!
HERE, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING!
JEEZ, JOSIE...WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S A YEAR'S WORTH OF TIPS, THAT'S WHAT IT IS...
...AND I'M PUTTIN' IT ALL ON YOU, JACK!

WHAT'S WRONG?
JOSIE...I AIN'T GONNA WIN THAT FIGHT.
D-DON'T BE SILLY, JACK...I CAN FEEL IT, I--
JOSIE.
I AIN'T GONNA WIN THAT FIGHT.
GET IT?
OH.
OH...OH, JACK.

THAT'S WHEN I KNEW I WAS GOING TO THROW THAT FIGHT. I WAS TOO OLD TO FIGHT OFF THOSE MEN THAT NIGHT...IF I WAS GONNA PROTECT MATT, I HAD TO BE SMART.
THE BOY'S SO WEAK...HE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF...
EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY...

AND THAT'S A PROMISE I'M GONNA KEEP, MATT.
CLOWN WANTS ME TO GO DOWN ALREADY... HE KNOWS HE'S GOT ME BEAT...
SO I BOTTLE THE FURY IN MY ARMS AND WILL IT TO MY KNEES.
I DO IT FOR YOU, MATT.
DING!
MAY YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT I DID FOR YOU.
END ROUND THREE.